

Special Education Advisory Panel Meeting Minutes

Office of Public Instruction
1300 11th Avenue Conference Room, Helena
October 7-8, 2010

Members in Attendance: Tim Norbeck, Mick Leary, Vaughn Kauffman, Lora Griffin, Bob Stansberry, Dave Mahon, Dustin Shipman, Christa Seger, Jim Marks, Terry Galle, Sharon Tregidga, Cody Preston, Edith McClafferty

Excused Members: Rena Steyaert (Thursday), Pam Campbell, Mick Leary (Friday)

Non-Members in Attendance: Tim Harris, Frank Podobnik, Steve York, Dick Trerise, John Copenhaver, Mary Gallagher, Paula Kitzke, Danni McCarthy, Francisco Roman, Marlene Wallis

Vice Chairperson Tim Norbeck called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. The Panel members, OPI staff and visitors introduced themselves.

Thursday, October 7, 2009

The Panel reviewed the Proposed Agenda. Dave Mahon moved to accept the Proposed Agenda, Terry Galle seconded the motion and the motion passed. The Proposed Agenda was accepted as written.

The Panel reviewed the Minutes of the April 29-30, 2010, Panel meeting. Mick Leary moved to accept the minutes, Christa Seger seconded the motion and the motion passed. The Minutes of the April 29-30, 2010, Panel meeting were accepted as written.

Overview of Panel Duties

Dick Trerise presented a brief overview of the Panel duties. He noted that a majority of the members of the panel shall be individuals with disabilities or parents of children with disabilities (ages birth through 26).

Election of Officers

The election of officers was scheduled for the June 7-8, 2010, Panel meeting. This meeting was cancelled; therefore, the election of officers is being held at this meeting.

Dustin Shipman moved that Vice Chairperson, Tim Norbeck, be elected as the Chairperson, Dave Mahon seconded the motion and the motion passed. Tim Norbeck will serve as the Chairperson for 2010-2011.

Vaughn Kauffman nominated Christa Seger as Vice-Chairperson, Bob Stansberry seconded the nomination and Christa Seger was appointed as the Vice-Chairperson by acclamation. Christa Seger will serve as the Vice-Chairperson for 2010-2011.

Dave Mahon nominated Dustin Shipman as Secretary, Vaughn Kauffman seconded the nomination and Dustin Shipman was appointed as the Secretary by acclamation. Dustin Shipman will serve as Secretary for 2010-2011.

OPI Report

Assistant Superintendent Steve York reported on “What is Going on at OPI.”

Race to the Top

Steve noted that Montana was not awarded the Race to the Top Grant. It was written to fit Montana and that does not align with the federal push. He said that the work has provided good guidance for where we are heading and good insight into the direction of the reauthorization of ESEA.

School Improvement Grant—Montana Schools of Promise

The grant is in place and active in four of the five eligible districts.

Quaglia Institute

The Institute selected Montana and the MBI as a demonstration site; one of ten in the United States.

Career and Tech Ed-MCIS

The Big SKY Pathways program has rolled out and is available; work is being completed to expand course offerings in the Montana Digital Academy to include more CTE courses; and 46 percent of those graduating in recent years have been concentrators, which mean they took three or more CTE courses in high school.

National Common Core Standards

Standards have been released and adopted by 37 states. Montana has not yet adopted them.

Web Wise Kids

Montana did not get the earmark for the Web Wise Kids, but we will try again.

School Food and Health Enhancement

A bill, called the BMI bill, will provide an avenue to collect the data so we know what the rate of obesity is for our children; Driver's Education continues to struggle with funding; Montana did receive a \$125,000 bridge grant to coordinate ongoing Safe and Drug-Free School activities. The formula grant monies no longer exist. The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) is being administered again this year.

Chapter 55-Accreditation Standards Review

The committee is making progress. One aspect of the committee is to review evaluation requirements for all certified personnel.

Indian Education

The program relating to Indian Education for All is still working on closing the achievement gap.

Title I

It is likely we will have a steep increase in schools not making AYP as Annual Measurable Objectives rise this year.

Data

We are continuing to build our data system on making sure it is user friendly, secure and has a concentration on using data and not just collecting it.

Legislature

The primary push will be a bill to raise the age of required school attendance to 18.

CSPD/Professional Development

Nikki Sandve reported on Project REAL: Responsive Education for All Learners. This project is designed to address three goals: Capacity Building; Support to LEAs; and Low-Incidence Support. The OPI will provide leadership for the activities that are designed to address each of these goals, with partnerships with personnel at the University of Montana, Parents, Let's Unite for Kids and the Montana School for the Deaf and Blind. The activities will engage a statewide network of consultants and facilitators who have been trained to support schools in adopting evidence-based models and instructional strategies shown to be effective in addressing needs of diverse students.

OPI Special Education Report

Personnel

Tim reported that the Division of Special Education will hire one more data person. Jenine Synness has taken a position with another division at the OPI; therefore, a replacement will be hired for her position with Special Education. Tim also noted that there are three opening positions with Response to Intervention (RTI).

Public Comment

Chairperson Tim Norbeck asked if there were public comments. There were none.

SIG—Schools of Promise

Sarah Pierce reported on the SIG-Schools of Promise. This initiative creates innovative collaborations to strengthen the state's most struggling schools. It creates a new partnership with the school systems that are eligible in Montana for the grant funding. The partnership calls for more teacher involvement, more time with students, revamped teacher evaluation and more community involvement. Sarah noted that the program is child centered and connects with parents, community and school. The program has established overall vision and approach to impact low-achieving schools; developed a place-based inventory tool for collecting programmatic information; and made community visits.

Sarah said that there are a lot of steps to take to impact low-achieving schools and it is a long, hard process. She said the Superintendent's direction is to create schools where students feel safe and have high expectations, parents are proud to send their children and all adults in the system are pushing for increased achievement and shared success.

Early Assistance Program/Legal Up-Date

Mary Gallagher reported that the Legal Services and Special Education Divisions of the Office of Public Instruction continue to implement the Early Assistance Program (EAP). This program is designed to provide technical assistance to parents, school districts, and advocacy organizations in regard to the delivery of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) for students with disabilities. Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), parents can file

complaints if they feel a district is not following administrative rules. The intent of the EAP program is to intervene prior to or at the time of filing a complaint with the OPI. At this intervention point the EAP will gather information pertinent to the situation from parents, schools, and others who are involved with the issue and attempt to resolve the problem within 15 school days.

Mary noted that the philosophy is to resolve issues amicably and, thereby, prevent costly legal entanglements wherever possible. She said that given the opportunity to discuss the issues at hand in a less formidable and confrontational venue, both parents and schools can reach agreement without undermining the relationships necessary to ensure the smooth delivery of special education services to children and youth with disabilities. If mediation does not solve the issue the parent can make a due process request to be heard in front of a hearing officer.

Mary Gallagher said that some of the issues presented to legal include autism (which is the major issue), behavior, isolation of student with down syndrome, small schools having difficulties with high-needs students, accommodations for bipolar students, as well as what methodology is provided to schools with students with autism.

Part B/Data and Accountability Unit

Frank Podobnik, Unit Manager, Part B/Data and Accountability Unit/Administrative Support, manages the IDEA Part B/Preschool Allocations, E-Grants, Child Count, State Special Education Funding, State Performance Plan, Annual Performance Report, School Psychology Services, Special Education Data Collections, Federal Reporting, AIM, and Cooperative Memberships.

Frank Podobnik informed the Panel of what data are collected by the Data and Accountability Unit—i.e., Child Count, Exiting Information, Discipline, Post-School Survey. The unit provides data analysis for the Annual Performance Report (APR) and the State Performance Plan (SPP). Frank will go over the APR and SPP at the January Panel meeting.

Frank told the Panel that a new Data person would be hired soon.

School Improvement/Monitoring Unit

Dick Trerise, Unit Manager, School Improvement/Monitoring, manages Compliance Monitoring, Focused Intervention, Secondary Transition, Transition Outcomes Project, Preschool, Mandt Training and the Significant Needs Grant.

Dick told the Panel that monitoring is on a 5-year cycle. Following monitoring the debriefing team informs the schools if there are required or corrective actions from the monitoring. If there are, it becomes necessary for the districts to submit ongoing evidence of their corrective actions.

New teacher training and AIM training are available to the districts.

Adjourn

Dennis Shipman moved to adjourn the meeting for the day, Dave Mahon seconded the motion and the motion passed. The Panel adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Friday, October 8, 2010

Advisory Panel Orientation

Dick Trerise introduced John Copenhaver to the members of the Panel. John is the Director for Technical Assistance for Excellence in Special Education (TAESE) and principal investigator for the Mountain Plains Regional Resource Center (MPRRC). Mr. Copenhaver has experience in special education at the school district, state, regional, and national levels. Before joining the TAESE/MPRRC staff, Mr. Copenhaver served as a special education resource teacher, school psychologist, and special education director. His work at TAESE and the MPRRC has involved providing technical assistance at the school, state, regional, and national levels. Mr. Copenhaver has extensive experience in Indian education. He provides technical assistance to states regarding their State Performance Plan, Annual Performance Report, and Levels of Determination.

John informed the Panel members that the purpose of the orientation was to provide Panel members with an overview of their purpose and functions and provide a heads up for Panel members on emerging regional and national issues.

John explained that some of the major issues, such as the economy, will impact the decisions the Panel members are faced with. He said that there will be more emphasis on fiscal accountability

He explained that a majority of the members must be individuals with disabilities or parents of children with disabilities. The state superintendent appoints the Panel members. Panel members represent a stakeholder group and should express the views of that group. The Panel's role is to advise not advocate regarding priority issues. Functions of the Panel that are outlined in the IDEA regulations include: advise the SEA of unmet needs within the state in the education of children with disabilities; comment publicly on any rules or regulations proposed by the state regarding the education of children with disabilities; advise the SEA on developing evaluations and reporting on data to the Secretary under Section 618 of the Act; advise the SEA in developing improvement plans to address findings identified in federal monitoring reports under Part B of the Act; advise the SEA in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities; and advise on eligible students with disabilities in adult prisons. John said that the bylaws should be reviewed annually. The Panel members received a packet of information regarding their roles as members of the Panel.

It was noted that the Panel serves without compensation, attends reasonable and necessary meetings and may request interpreters. The Panel needs to provide input for Advisory Panel agenda items. The meetings are open for public comment with ground rules and official minutes are taken.

Meeting Dates

January 13-14, 2011

May 5-6, 2011 (Joint Meeting with CSPD)

Agenda Items

The State Performance Plan (SPP)
The Annual Performance Report (APR)
Legislature

Adjourn

Dustin Shipman moved to adjourn the meeting; Christa Seger seconded the motion and the motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.